United Nations A/C.3/73/SR.4

General Assembly
Seventy-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
25 October 2018

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 4th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 3 October 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair:	Mr. Saikal	(Afghanistan)
later:	Mr. Kováčik (Vice-Chair)	(Slovakia)
later:	Mr. Saikal (Chair)	(Afghanistan)

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18-16406 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 28: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/73/214)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/73/61–E/2018/4, A/73/211 and A/73/211/Rev.1, A/73/213, A/73/220 and A/73/254)

(c) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*) (A/73/292)

1. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), expressed sympathy to the Government of Indonesia in connection with the recent earthquake and tsunami. The States members of CELAC were committed to taking appropriate measures to ensure social development. They considered the eradication of hunger and poverty an ethical, social and economic imperative and called for renewed political and social commitment to the goal of equitable, inclusive, democratic, multi-ethnic and multicultural societies based on universal respect for all human rights. To that end, a number of them had instituted preferential treatment or participation quotas for marginalized and vulnerable groups.

2. The CELAC countries were deeply concerned by the uneven progress towards global income equality, the increase in wealth inequality, the continuing unacceptably high levels of extreme poverty and the persistence of non-income inequalities.

3. The necessary revitalization of the global partnership for development hinged on the participation of all countries in accordance with their capacities, the allocation of adequate financial and technical resources and the transfer of knowledge through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. The States members of CELAC remained committed to promoting inclusive economic growth, social progress and sustainable development through national policies and programmes that had timetables and specific objectives and prioritized the poorest and most vulnerable. They urged national and international action to address inequalities in the distribution of services, resources and infrastructure and in access to food, health care, education and decent employment.

4. The CELAC countries were committed to improving access to education, training and employment for their many out-of-school and unemployed young people. They were also actively promoting the full social, political, economic and cultural integration of disabled persons, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. With respect to older persons, they urged the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing to consider the possibility of an international convention on their rights.

5. All States should establish universal social protection systems that took age, disability and gender into account. They should also address the specific needs and challenges of families, which played a key role in social development.

6. **Ms. Kuldmaa** (Estonia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Member States should adopt specific strategies to encourage youth participation in social development policy-making. Furthermore, especially in a world of post-truth politics, it was necessary to ensure universal access to formal and informal education, regardless of socioeconomic status or disability. The Estonian youth delegates welcomed the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative. Educated people made more sustainable, healthier decisions for themselves, their families and their communities.

7. **Mr. Rodrigo** (Sri Lanka) said that, to promote inclusive development, his country provided free technical and vocational training and offered career guidance and counselling at the national and district levels. It had also been a driving force behind the General Assembly resolution establishing World Youth Skills Day (A/RES/69/145). Sri Lanka had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2016 and had protected the disabled under a disabilities rights law since 1996. It had implemented a number of national action plans covering employment, accessibility, vocational training and rehabilitation for the disabled, and its National Human Rights Action Plan 2017–2021 aimed to further improve infrastructure-related accessibility and to boost disability rights awareness and enforcement.

8. **Ms. Iileka** (Namibia) said that her country had recently hosted the thirty-eighth summit of the Southern African Development Community under the theme "Promoting Infrastructure and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development". With more than a third of the population between the ages of 16 and 35, Namibia must harness its young human capital in order to achieve sustainable development. Accordingly, it was prioritizing technical and vocational education and

training with a view to combating high youth unemployment and improving the match between skill supply and demand.

9. Over the past 10 years, Namibia had reduced poverty at one of the fastest rates in Africa. Social development expenditure, including old age and disability grants, represented a substantial portion of the national budget. To combat food insecurity, its successful pilot food bank programme had been extended from one to three regions. It was also developing guidelines to improve the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of various social protection programmes. In March, it had launched a fund aimed at providing collateral-free loans to small and medium-sized enterprises and informal sector operators. In closing, she called for collaborative efforts to improve the plight of the poor, which would benefit rich and poor alike.

10. **Ms. Čupić** (Serbia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Serbian youth delegation welcomed the recent launch of the United Nations Youth 2030 strategy. Young people had a responsibility to address the challenges of climate change, terrorism, violent extremism and growing inequality through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. Serbia considered young people the single most powerful force for social change and was among a limited number of countries with a ministry of youth. It had enacted a law on youth and was implementing a national youth strategy for 2015–2025.

12. **Mr. Petrović** (Serbia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his country provided support to outstanding young students through its Fund for Young Talents and had a programme to promote youth volunteerism. The city of Novi Sad had been awarded the title of European Youth Capital 2019.

13. The first priority of the United Nations Youth 2030 strategy was to promote youth engagement and participation. Partnership and cooperation among nations would enable young people to translate their ideas into action.

14. *Mr. Kováčik (Slovakia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

15. **Mr. Sanvisi** (Suriname), speaking as a youth delegate, said that social media had become the greatest communication tool of all time. However, it exposed young people to interpersonal violence, pornographic content and cyberbullying. It was necessary to raise awareness of the benefits and dangers of social media, especially among the young. His youth delegation would staunchly support all efforts in that area and welcomed the potential contribution of the new youth strategy.

16. **Mr. Biegman** (Suriname), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the growing incidence of woman-headed households had a negative impact on children. Boys did not have caring male role models, and girls did not have the confidence to set boundaries with men. As members of the National Youth Parliament, the youth delegates endeavoured to inspire boys and young men to balance body, mind and spirit and, through the national education programme, to respect their elders, their peers and authority. Quality education included social and emotional learning.

17. **Mr. Hendricks** (South Africa) said that, on the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, his Government continued to be guided by the ideals for which he strove, placing social development at the centre of its policies. The number of beneficiaries of child support and old age grants would keep pace with the growth of the child and elderly populations, and it had arranged a number of events in celebration of the International Day of Older Persons in October. South Africa continued to make progress towards the goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, most recently through a comprehensive disaggregation of the national development plan to inform disability-inclusive planning and a study of the cost of disability to South African households. Access to health care, including reproductive health care, and other socio-economic rights were guaranteed in the Constitution. His Government recognized the important role of families and continued to engage with civil society through its National Family Service Forum.

18. **Mr. Thein** (Myanmar) said that his country's new youth policy created opportunities for young people to learn about innovation and emerging technologies. The State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi, had been holding talks about peace with young people and had recently conducted discussions on literature with university students.

19. Although the elderly were traditionally cared for by relatives, Myanmar had launched a pension scheme for people aged 90 and above. It was also formulating a law on older persons with the assistance of local and international consultants, and home or community-based day-care centres provided care for more than three thousand older persons. Myanmar operated a wide range of social protection programmes for all ages.

20. As a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Myanmar had made it part of domestic law in 2015. It was currently developing a strategic plan to improve the quality of life of the

disabled in the context of the third Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons. It operated institution-based programmes for people with disabilities and provided education and vocation training without discrimination. A sign language interpretation service and curriculum were available.

21. Myanmar was developing a modern education system and working to improve literacy. In September, it had signed a decent work country programme with the International Labour Organization.

22. **Mr. Poudyal** (Nepal) said that the least developed countries, particularly landlocked and island States, were more vulnerable to climate change, extremism, forced migration and food and energy crises. Nepal was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural society. The participation and representation of disadvantaged groups and communities, including women, was guaranteed through a system of quotas for all elected offices and public-sector jobs.

23. Social justice and inclusive social development were at the heart of its plans, policies and programmes. It had made significant progress in poverty reduction and human development since 2000, and its current development plan was fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While modest, its social protection floors provided a safety net for the elderly, the disabled and single women, and it offered scholarships to girls, disabled children and children in marginalized communities and remote areas. It was also implementing targeted programmes in backward communities. Despite the challenges of its mountain topography, Nepal was determined for provide technology access and quality skills training, education and health services for all.

24. **Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) said that his Government continued to give priority to combating poverty and optimizing the national solidarity system. It was close to instituting universal health care and had undertaken ambitious reforms aimed at encouraging a strong private sector capable of creating jobs for young people and others. It also attached great importance to promoting equity for youth and women. For example, 30 per cent of the members of the new Cabinet were women, in accordance with the gender equity law.

25. Social assistance took a variety of forms. Almost 6,000 social housing units would be made available to low- and middle-income households in 2018 alone, and close to 70,000 poor and food-insecure households had been receiving cash transfers as of the end of 2017. With respect to the disabled, the 2015–2024 strategic plan for disabled persons addressed social protection, health care, rehabilitation, education and decent work. To complement ongoing programmes, each year during Social Solidarity Month, government agencies, traditional and religious leaders, businesses and civil society organizations made an extra effort to help the country's most vulnerable people.

26. **Mr. Duruiheoma** (Nigeria) said that his Government was committed to improving the lives and well-being of all Nigerians, regardless of social status, creed or affiliation. Its N-Power programmes, which provided innovative training for young Nigerians, had already deployed more than 400,000 university graduates to key sectors and created jobs for more than 30,000 non-graduates; it would ultimately work in tandem with the planned innovation hubs. In accordance with its commitment to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Nigeria had recently enacted a law stipulating the establishment of a national senior citizens centre. Nigeria provided disabled persons with training in various vocations and encouraged businesses to reserve 2 per cent of vacancies for them.

27. The family — defined as a man, a woman, their children and their relatives — was the fundamental unit of Nigerian society, responsible for the care of young and old alike and for the education and socialization of children. Nigeria rejected any redefinition of the family and would work constructively with like-minded countries to uphold its sanctity.

28. **Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh) said that his Government was working tirelessly to eradicate poverty through people-centred development plans and actions. Thanks to consistent investment in health, water, education and sanitation, Bangladesh had significantly reduced infant mortality and had increased life expectancy to more than 72 years. It operated 18,000 community and rural health centres and distributed 30 different medicines free of charge.

29. To achieve middle-income status by 2021, his Government was investing in human resources development, with a focus on youth development. Bangladesh had achieved 100 per cent primary enrolment some years previously and had increased literacy from 45 to almost 73 per cent in less than 10 years.

30. Volunteerism was critical for participatory development. To encourage it, Bangladesh provided youth organizations with financial support for volunteer activities. It also contributed to the United Nations Volunteers Special Voluntary Fund.

31. Bangladesh took a "whole of society" approach to social development, relying heavily on family-centred policies and programmes, which it would continue to

strengthen. It was also working to ensure respect for the rights of persons with disabilities by mainstreaming disability in its development policies and programmes. It was a co-organizer of annual the high-level events in observance of World Autism Awareness Day.

32. Bangladesh stressed the importance of effective enforcement of labour laws with regard to migrant workers and promoted safe, orderly and regular migration. It had participated actively in the deliberations leading to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and had played an active role in negotiating the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.

33. *Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan), Chair, resumed the Chair.*

34. **Mr. Molina Linares** (Guatemala) said that structural gaps constrained the development of middle-income countries. A social transformation approach was needed to grapple with complex, increasingly interrelated problems, including growing gender gaps, inequalities and poverty.

35. His delegation urged Member States to translate the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the disability-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets into concrete social development measures.

36. Many older persons lacked independent income, decent work and social security benefits or pensions, and their dependence on others made them vulnerable to violence. National and international efforts were needed to strengthen institutional capacities to ensure their fundamental freedoms and quality of life. The delegations should join forces to bring about an international instrument on the rights of older persons.

37. Although there had been significant progress on raising awareness of the importance of young people for sustainable development, formal recognition of their role had lagged. It was critical to invest in quality education and health care and to ensure significant, inclusive youth participation in policy-making.

38. **Mr. Barro** (Senegal) said that the eradication of poverty and the empowerment of vulnerable populations were closely linked and mutually reinforcing. Therefore, in the Emerging Senegal Plan, his Government emphasized the promotion of human capital. Senegal was pushing towards universal health care and had instituted a family security grants programme. Other notable initiatives included the Equal Opportunity Card, which gave disabled people access to special education, transport, employment and rehabilitation benefits; a national gender equity strategy, a national social protection initiative, a national child protection strategy, a national women's entrepreneurship strategy, a support programme for older persons and a literacy and vocational training programme targeting rural populations and women.

39. **Mr.** Youssouf Aden **Moussa** (Djibouti) said that social development was inextricably linked to economic growth and a driver of his Government's development policy. Its Vision Djibouti 2030 had guided the 2015–2019 national development plan, which aimed to ensure solid and diversified production bases, create jobs and income, reduce social inequalities, provide universal access to basic services, promote a better quality of life and protect the environment.

40. Djibouti had made tangible progress on improving the quality and geographic availability of health care in recent years. At the international level, it welcomed the global commitment to health demonstrated by the first high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the fight against tuberculosis and the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

41. **Mr. Aitbaev** (Kyrgyzstan), speaking as a youth delegate, said that 14-to-30-year olds constituted 30 per cent of the Kyrgyz population. Since its independence, Kyrgyzstan had sought to establish the legal, socio-economic and organizational conditions for youth development and had recently approved a 2017–2020 programme for the development of youth policy. His Government was working to develop rural areas, where most young people lived, and had declared 2018 the Year of Regional Development. Its efforts were focused on assisting small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting the specialization of regional exports, improving transport, expanding access to and improving public services, developing a health care network, opening new schools, improving security and developing border-area infrastructure.

42. Kyrgyzstan sought to create more opportunities for young people to shape its future and was deploying all available resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In that context, he urged stronger international cooperation to boost youth employment, ensure modern, quality education, combat drug addiction, crime and poverty and promote social integration. Kyrgyzstan very much appreciated the assistance provided by the United Nations youth programmes, including the United Nations peacebuilding programme for youth, and would welcome projects targeting drug trafficking.

43. Noting the importance of strengthening intercultural dialogue, he drew attention to the ninetieth

anniversary of the birth of the writer Chinghiz Aitmatov, who had given voice to the Kyrgyz people, and to the third World Nomad Games, which had further strengthened intercultural understanding.

44. **Ms. Al Za'abi** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her country recognized the importance of youth participation in global decision-making and would work with the United Nations to promote youth issues across the world. It saw young people as the shapers of the future and spared no effort to provide the environment and resources they needed to assume their roles in society and valued them as leaders. The current Minister of State for Youth Affairs, appointed in 2016 at the age of 22, was the youngest government minister in the world. In 2016, the United Arab Emirates had launched a national youth agenda developed by and for young people.

45. **Mr. Al Braiki** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as a youth delegate, said that that his country had established various youth councils to give young men and women a voice and a means of action. He was a member of one such council, which had worked on initiatives to empower young people in the context of the 2030 Agenda and to provide them with an opportunity to advise decision makers on youth-related issues. In addition, under the Youth Circles initiative, more than 80 circles had already been hosted to promote dialogue between the Government and Emirati youth. In closing, he thanked the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth for her contribution to expanding the Organization's youth engagement and advocacy efforts.

46. **Ms. Feryi** (Ethiopia) said that, given the priority nature of social integration and the eradication of extreme poverty, her Government's social development efforts were focused on equal opportunity in education, affordable health care and job creation. The National Social Protection Policy, which included a community-based health care scheme for informal-sector workers, was designed to create livelihoods and jobs, promote social insurance and increase access to social services and legal protection for the vulnerable. The national development plan incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals.

47. Ethiopia had taken steps to encourage the full participation of persons with disabilities and ensure them equal opportunities in all spheres. Because families were agents of development, it made family policies an integral part of its inclusive development approach. The national action plan on ageing was in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which had been translated into the federal working language.

48. Ethiopia considered youth volunteerism an important aspect of social development, and the number of young volunteers had increased significantly. Significant progress had been made in improving health as well as school enrolment and access. To combat unemployment, Ethiopia had set up a revolving fund to create jobs for young people and was working to promote the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises. It would also continue to establish industrial parks, which had proved a major source of employment.

49. **Mr. Adam** (Sudan) said that his country had developed a national poverty eradication strategy that addressed 17 key areas, including youth employment, literacy, and primary and higher education enrolment. To supplement the primary role of the family in the care of older relatives, the State had conducted studies and compiled statistics to identify the needs of older persons. It also provided comprehensive health care services to older persons and provided assistance to their caregivers. Sudan had also launched a family stability project to build strong families, which focused on raising awareness of the importance of the family and identifying and addressing issues that could undermine the stability of families with a view to bolstering their resilience in a changing world.

50. In 2015, Sudan had launched a decent work and economic empowerment strategy to promote the social integration of persons with disabilities and their employment in the public and private sectors. It also supported microfinancing initiatives and had established a national fund to address their needs. Sudan also reserved a portion of social housing for persons with disabilities and had launched programmes to facilitate their enrolment in academic and vocational training courses. All discrimination on the basis of disability was prohibited.

51. The social development goals and objectives set by the international community could not be achieved without closer cooperation among Member States. In particular, States must meet their commitments in the area of social development and establish effective partnerships to support efforts to build their national capacities. It was also critical to cancel all debts owed by developing countries, which continued to undermine their efforts to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development.

52. **Ms. Sentissi** (Morocco) said that there could be no "one size fits all" development strategy. Morocco took its commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development very seriously. It was engaged in a vast, decades-long process of political, economic, social and religious reform aimed at strengthening democracy and

the rule of law, expanding freedoms and improving access to education, health care, employment and social protection. Thanks to a people-centred social development initiative launched in 2005 and entering its third phase, it was continuing to reduce poverty, marginalization and exclusion, as well economic disparities among regions. In keeping with the Kingdom's conviction that young people were drivers of development, they were included in forums, seminars and studies that would inform future planning.

53. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that her country was delivering on its social development commitments, thanks in part to strong economic growth due to macroeconomic stabilization, a healthier investment climate and the clean-up of the banking sector. Despite heavy security and defence expenses necessitated by foreign aggression, Ukraine had forged ahead with pension, education, health care and public administration reforms, as well as decentralization and fighting corruption, and it was implementing a national poverty reduction strategy. The education reform launched in 2017 aimed to create schools where students learned how to think and to apply their learning. With regard to women's human rights, Ukraine had recently adopted a national action plan implementing the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and a social programme on equal rights and opportunities for women and men to 2021.

54. In response to the humanitarian crisis in the Donbas region, Ukraine had increased its budget allocation for cash transfers to internally displaced persons more than six-fold. It had also adopted a comprehensive strategy for their integration.

55. **Ms. Zutter** (Luxembourg), speaking as a youth delegate, said that successful social development required a human rights-based approach and the participation of all development actors. Like the European Union, Luxembourg had institutionalized youth participation in political debates and decisions. However, worldwide, two out of three countries had no formal political mechanism for young people to express their views on national policy, even though it was they who would reap the consequences of policy decisions. The Luxembourg youth delegates urged Member States to establish institutions for actively including young voices in the political discourse.

56. **Mr. Winckel** (Luxembourg), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Government of Luxembourg had recently presented a national sustainable development plan that identified 10 priority action areas, all of which had the support of Luxembourg youth. In a country where almost half of the population was foreign, education represented an essential tool for strengthening social cohesion and discouraging exclusion and discrimination. Furthermore, education laid the groundwork for participation in public life, employment on an equal footing and active citizenship. They urged Member States to make education a policy priority and to invest commensurately.

57. **Ms. Banaken Elel** (Cameroon) and that the report on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/73/214) underscored the need for urgent action to reduce inequality in and among countries. Reducing national inequalities benefited rich and poor alike. Her country, whose inclusive development policy had brought steady economic growth since 2010, was a case in point.

58. Its efforts to reduce income inequality included a civil service recruitment programme targeting young people that had led to the creation of more than 250,000 public- and private-sector jobs; programmes targeting young members of the returning diaspora, poor urban youth, disabled persons, and vulnerable families; preferential loans for young people; social security payments for the elderly; job-creation and job-access policies; a 30 per cent increase in the minimum wage; equal wages for men and women and voluntary contribution to the national social insurance fund for informal-sector workers. In addition, Cameroon was implementing a social safety net project with the support of the World Bank. However, the impact of all of those efforts would be strengthened by international measures to reduce development disparities among States and by assistance in the design and implementation of a nationally appropriate social protection system.

59. **Ms. Zeggar** (France) said that the social inclusion of older persons was a critical challenge in the context of generally longer lifespans. In line with the statement by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons that older persons should be seen as active contributors to society, a bill would be proposed in the legislature to ensure that more older people remained independent. Under a law in force since 2015, persons over age 60 could receive an autonomy allocation to make staying in their homes or living in an assisted living community more affordable.

60. **Mr. AlShatti** (Kuwait), pointing to the large differences in per capita gross national product among countries, urged the mobilization of efforts to leave no one behind. Since its founding, the State of Kuwait had financed more than 960 development projects, including 380 in the Arab world.

61. To empower young people economically, socially and politically, Kuwait had set up a national small and medium-sized enterprise fund which facilitated market entry for young entrepreneurs, thereby reducing youth unemployment. It had also established the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and created a national youth council.

62. Kuwait had reduced adult illiteracy to 2.9 per cent and had eliminated child illiteracy. In view of the challenging nature of the disability-related Sustainable Development Goals, it encouraged the sharing of experiences. Furthermore, it called on all Member States to assume their responsibility to settle armed conflicts peacefully, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, because sustainable development could not be achieved in the presence of armed conflict.

63. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that, for the past 10 years, Azerbaijan had been one of the world's fastest growing economies. It had translated its success into improved socioeconomic conditions for all, reducing both the poverty and the unemployment rate to 5 per cent. Three thousand schools and 600 hospitals and health centres had been built, together with social housing for low-income families. Public spending on agricultural and rural activities had risen, preferential loans were available to entrepreneurs, and new industrial parks were being opened.

64. With one of the youngest populations in Eastern Europe, Azerbaijan emphasized quality education and decent employment for young people. The Ministry of Youth and Sport and the President's Youth Foundation provided financial support for domestic and international youth projects. Azerbaijan's national volunteer programme placed strong emphasis on young people. The Government had also taken steps to strengthen social protection for older persons, including by providing in-home services to more than 12,000 older persons who lived alone or were disabled.

65. **Ms. Mönöko** (Lesotho) said that her country had given women full land rights and reserved one third of seats in local councils for women. Its national poverty reduction strategy targeted youth development, which was coordinated under a national youth policy. Primary education was free and compulsory, and the State provided support for students enrolled in public vocational training centres.

66. **Ms. Goliatha** (Central African Republic) said that the ongoing armed conflict had brought about the collapse of the Central African economy. Violence had caused massive population displacements, closed schools and impeded health care. Together with economic tensions, it also interfered with the functioning of the judicial system and financial services. The Government recognized the need to enable the Special Criminal Court to pursue its investigations, to halt the illegal exploitation of the country's resources and to collect and manage tax revenues, and it was gradually retaking territory and re-establishing basic social services. With the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the international community, it hoped that its efforts would prevail.

67. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that the United Nations needed to play a more active and coordinated role in combating the intimidation tactics used by powerful States against developing countries, which undermined international relations, peace and development. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals and would continue to work tirelessly to achieve them. The family was the cornerstone of its development policy, and its social programmes in support of the family had helped to reduce poverty and extreme poverty by half since 2009. Production and quality of life had improved, and the State had established the right to recreation. Older persons were entitled to a pension and were cared for by their families in the context of a culture of solidary and support. Nicaragua would continue its programme of land redistribution and had set targets for water and sanitation, telecommunications, health, environmental issues, job creation, education and housing.

68. **Ms. Larrabee** (Observer for the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)), expressing sympathy to the Government and people of Indonesia in connection with the 28 September earthquake and tsunami, said that some 200 volunteers and staff from the Indonesian Red Cross Society had already been deployed to the area. While IFRC was currently responding to 36 emergencies or protracted crises worldwide, a large part of its efforts focused on helping communities prevent or prepare for such events. Its emphasis on support for and with the most vulnerable accorded with the inclusive vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

69. IFRC relied heavily on the contributions of an estimated 12 million volunteer first responders, who faced increasingly complex, prolonged and dangerous crises. They were younger and more urban than in the past, with different expectations and skills. In that context, it particularly welcomed the report on the plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which drew attention to the need for more research on the impact and needs of

volunteers and emphasized their safety and security. In view of the urgent need for a better understanding the contributions and needs of volunteers, IFRC would help to organize the 2020 global technical meeting on volunteering, which she encouraged Member States to support.

70. IFRC welcomed the Committee's growing attention to the challenges faced by people with disabilities and its 2018 focus on disasters and emergencies. Disabled people were often left behind in an emergency, and the emergency itself could cause or compound disabilities. According to World Health Organization estimates 1 in 4 refugees had a disability.

71. As the co-lead of the Global Shelter Cluster, IFRC had worked with other organizations to develop international guidelines on the inclusion of older and disabled people in humanitarian situations, and earlier that year, the Age and Disability Consortium, of which it was a member, had published a guide for embedding the inclusion of older and disabled people in humanitarian policies and practice. In addition, through its partnership with the Special Olympics, 11 national societies had trained and certified 200 Special Olympics athletes as first responders.

72. **Mr. Chekeche** (Zimbabwe) said that his country's commitment to social development was embodied in the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation. Most recently, it had launched Zimbabwe Women's Microfinance Bank and its first youth-centric bank, Empower Bank. Young people also had access to vocational and empowerment training, provided with the support of the private sector. Zimbabwe's youth policies were in line with the African Youth Charter and international policies, and youth development and empowerment had been mainstreamed across the line ministries.

73. Zimbabwe had long invested heavily in education, including by providing stipends for poor and vulnerable children; as a result, it had one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. It also invested heavily in health, with various assistance programmes for vulnerable populations. The civil service was the largest employer of persons with disabilities.

74. **Mr. Shulgin** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Ukrainian delegation had once again blamed problems in the social development sphere on fictitious external aggression, when they were clearly the result of an unconstitutional coup and the ensuing civil war. One of the weapons of that war was an economic blockade of southeast Ukraine, which harmed the very people about whom it purported to be so concerned.

75. **Mr. Yaremenko** (Ukraine) said that repeating the same lie over and over did not make it true. The Russian Federation had invaded Ukraine on 20 February 2014, and it continued to control, arm and provide financial assistance to the region under its control. In 2014, the President and members of Parliament had come to power through legitimate elections. Thus, the Russian representative's claim of a coup and ensuing civil war was unfounded. Lying was dangerous, because a liar was not believed, even when he spoke the truth.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.